

State of Vermont  
Department of Labor  
Office of the Commissioner

5 Green Mountain Drive  
P.O. Box 488  
Montpelier, VT 05601  
[labor.vermont.gov](http://labor.vermont.gov)

[telephone] 802-828-4301  
[fax] 802-828-4181

**To:** Vermont General Assembly  
**From:** Commissioner's Office, Department of Labor  
**Date:** January 12, 2021  
**Subject:** Unemployment Insurance Weekly Update

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## GENERAL

- The Department has created a “UI Updates” page on the website. This page will house all updates related to UI programs in real time. That page can be found here: <https://labor.vermont.gov/unemployment-insurance/ui-updates>
- The UI call center has reported high call volumes, resulting in higher-than-normal wait times, over the past two weeks. This is likely a direct result of the time of year (days following the Christmas and New Year's holiday, which are typically high-volume periods), coupled with the recent authorization of the CARES Act Extension. Anecdotal information from the call center shows that there is a high number of callers simply asking for general information pertaining to the CARES Act extension. To combat this high call volume, Maximus will be increasing the number of agents on the line during high-volume times, and to address the consistency issue, Maximus will also be pulling in additional resources to improve operations and protocols. The Department has also increased its communications to redirect callers to lower call volume days (Wed-Sat).
- CARES Act Extension Provisions:
  - The new CARES Act legislation extends PUA and PEUC benefits by 11 weeks for eligible claimants. Claimants will be able to receive these extended benefits through the benefit week ending April 10, 2021; however, no new PEUC or PUA claims will be accepted after March 14, 2021. Individuals who had previously exhausted their benefits under either the PEUC program or the Extended Benefits program, and are still unemployed, can log back into their UI claimant portal and resume filing beginning January 3, 2021.
  - The FPUC program was also reinstated with the passage of this Act and claimants do not need to take any additional action in order to receive the new FPUC benefit of \$300 per week.

- This legislation also created what is called the Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) program, which affords claimants filing in regular UI or PEUC, but who also have earned more than \$5,000 in self-employed wages for the previous tax year, to be eligible for an additional \$100 weekly benefit. This additional benefit is on top of both the base benefit and the \$300 FPUC payment. While this program is optional for states, Vermont has chosen to enroll in this benefit program for Vermonters.
- USDOL has also announced that States will be able to pay benefits for the week ending 1/2/21. This means that there will be no “lost week” or lapse in benefits for PUA or PEUC individuals who were still in filing status for the benefit week ending 12/26/20. With that, the Department is working to implement the changes to both its legacy mainframe system as well as its PUA system. Eligible claimants may see a delay in their ability to file, but they will be able to receive benefits for the week of 12/27/20 – 1/2/21.
- If an active claimant in the PUA program is unable to file for the benefit week ending (BWE) 12/26/20, it is likely because they have received the maximum number of weeks of the program under the original CARES Act. The CARES Act extension begins this week and eligible PUA claimants who have exhausted their original benefits will be able to file for the BWE 01/02/21 once the program has been updated with the federal changes. The new CARES Act extension does not cover the BWE 12/26/20 for PUA claimants who have already exhausted their benefits.

#### Standard Unemployment Insurance Series

(Covered Employees)



#### Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Series

(Independent Contractors, Sole Proprietors, Self-employed, and Other)



#### Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

(Additional \$300 Benefit to Claimants in All Programs)



- Claimants who are able to do so, should be actively looking for work while collecting UI benefits. Vermont’s official work search is currently suspended, it is likely to be reinstated in the coming weeks. Employers across the state are reporting job availability in a number of sectors and industries and are actively hiring for a variety of positions. Prior to the Pandemic, UI claimants were required to conduct three official work inquiries each week in order to be eligible for benefits.

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- Our Workforce Development team is actively providing outreach and services to unemployed Vermonters to assist with re-employment. More information about the Department’s employment and re-employment efforts can be found online at [www.labor.vermont.gov/jobs](http://www.labor.vermont.gov/jobs).

## CLAIMS

- Our weekly numbers continue to show an increase in the number of initial claims be filed. This is believed to be part of the seasonal shift in employment. Traditionally, the week of Thanksgiving is the Department’s busiest week of the year for the UI Division.
- Claimants filing for unemployment continue to receive a weekly jobs newsletter with highlighted job opportunities available across Vermont. **January 11<sup>th</sup> Jobs Newsletter:** <https://conta.cc/3i1PGoV>

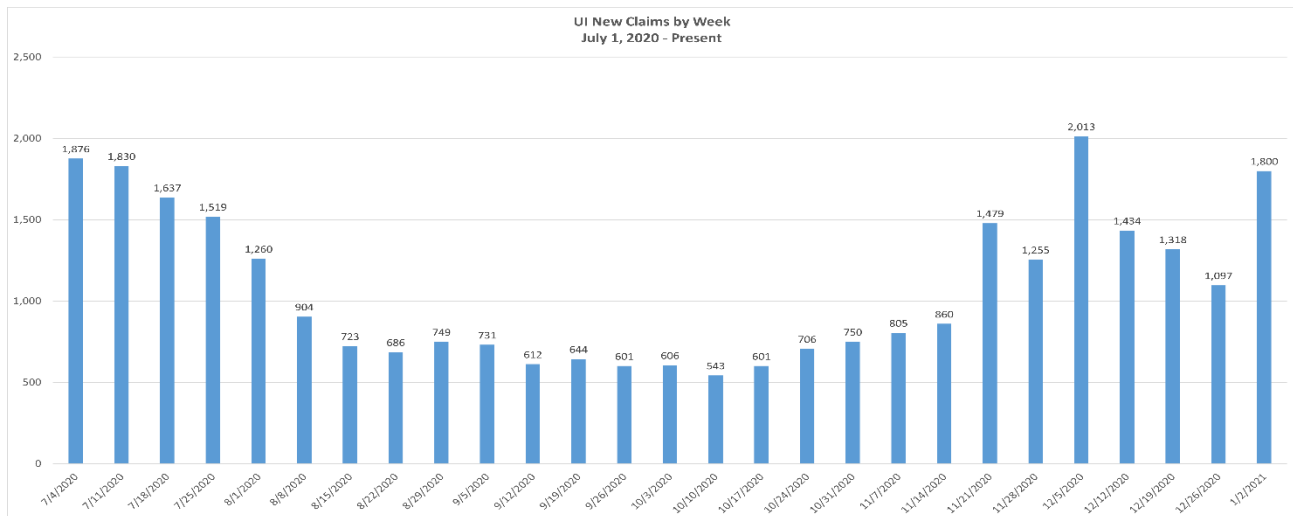


Figure 1

Continued Claims Filed						
Week Ending	11/28	12/5	12/12	12/19	12/26	1/2
<b>Regular UI</b>	10,082	11,983	11,909	11,913	10,088	<b>12,194</b>
<b>PEUC</b>	8,963	9,825	9,833	9,724	8,589	<b>8,055</b>
<b>EB</b>	704	885	977	1,116	909	<b>473</b>
<b>PUA</b>	8,451	8,694	8,675	8,577	8,390	<b>3,338</b>
<b>Total</b>	28,200	31,342	31,394	31,330	27,976	<b>24,087</b>

Figure 2

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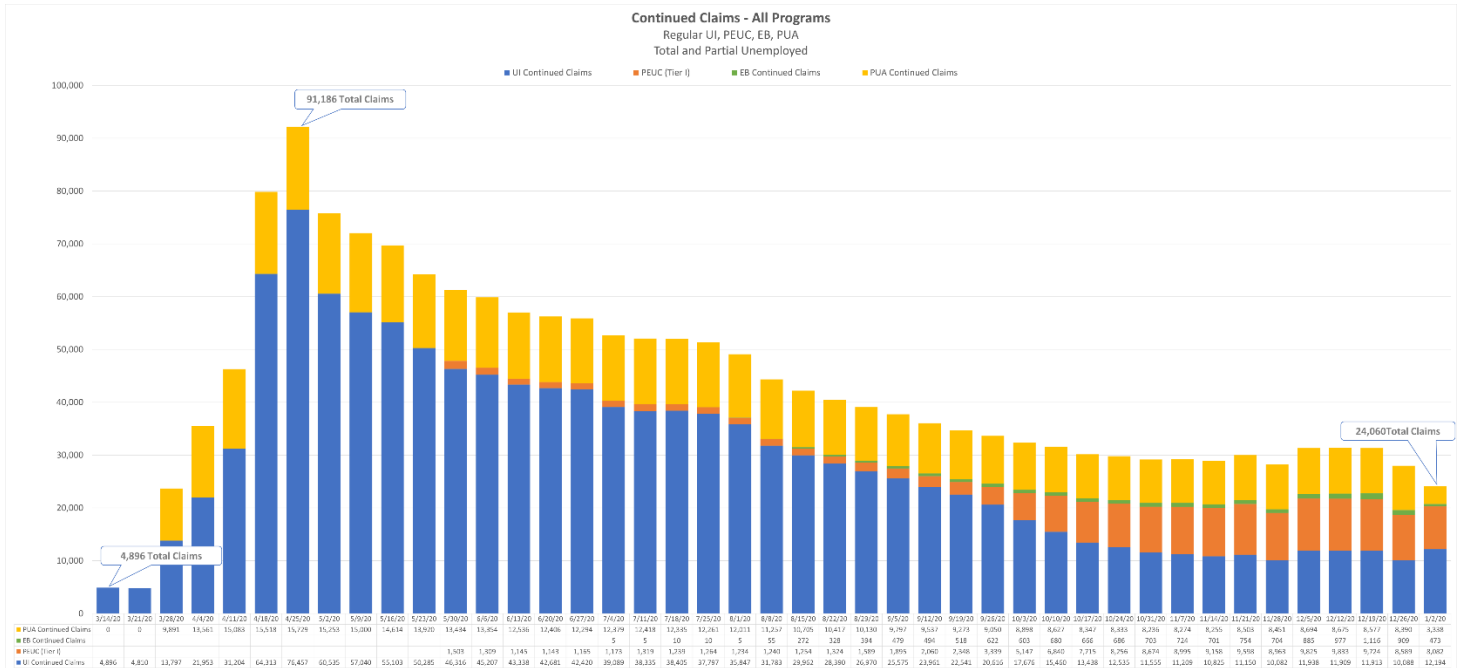


Figure 3

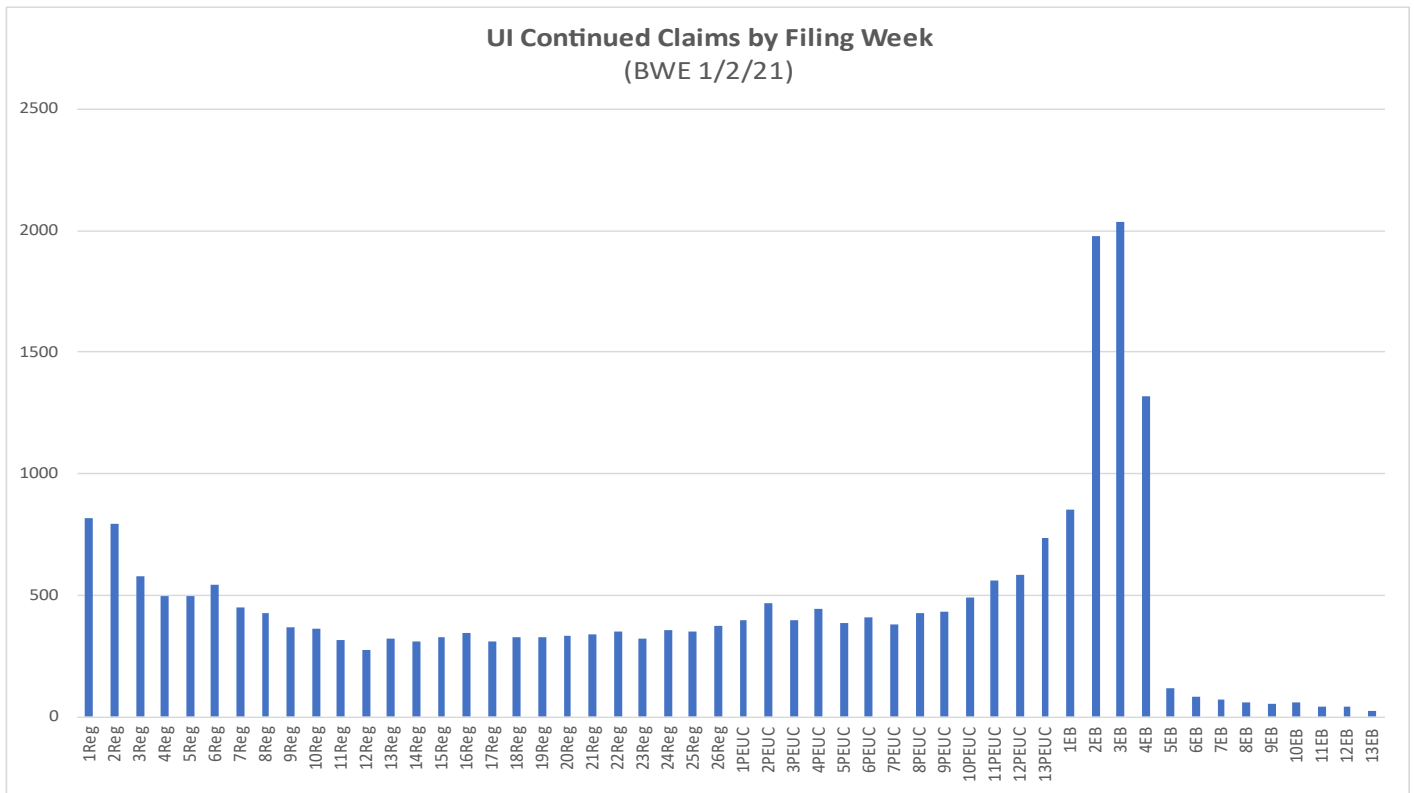


Figure 4

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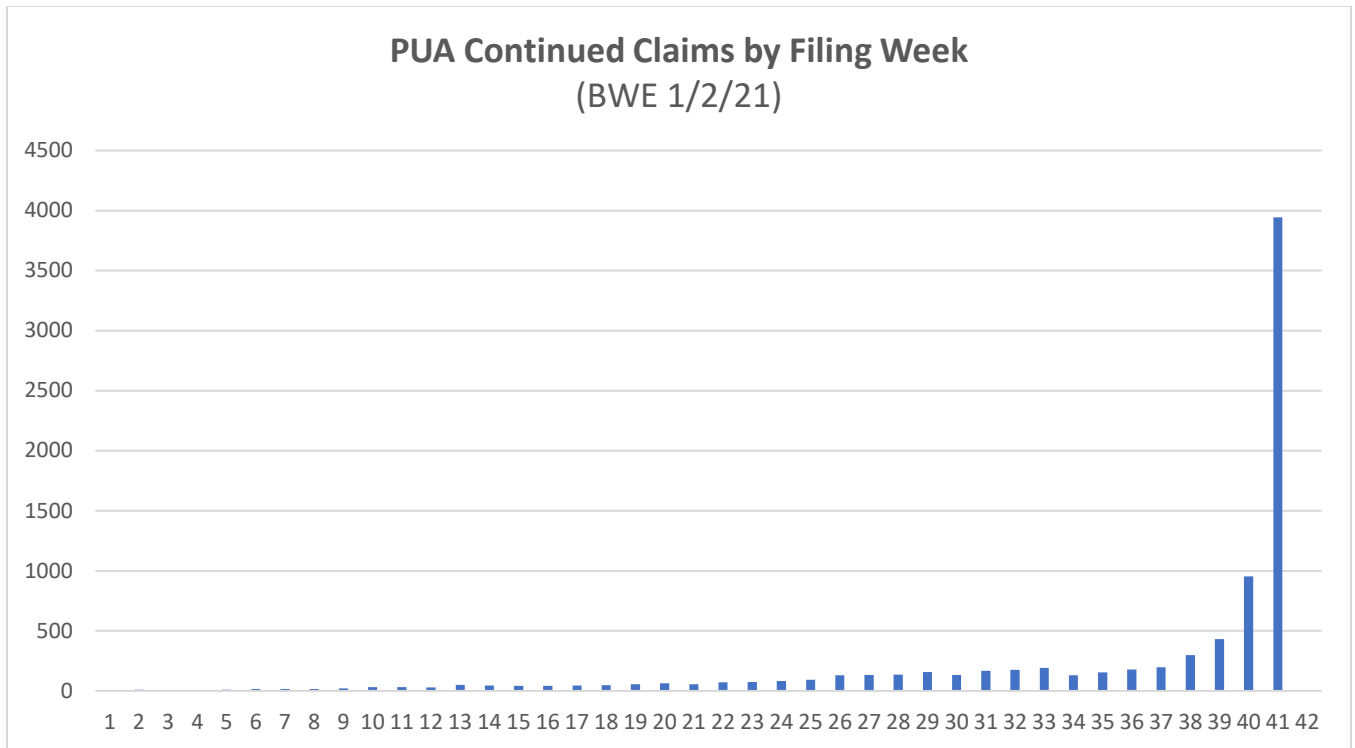


Figure 5

## PAYMENTS

- The Vermont Short Term Supplemental (VSTS) benefit was paid out to all eligible claimants. In total, there were 33,509 claimants receiving the benefit for a total payment amount of \$14,606,500.
- As of January 12, 2021, the LWA program has paid out \$56,129,700 to roughly 35,000 claimants.
- Regular UI is funded by state trust fund dollars, PEUC is fully-federally funded, and EB is currently fully-federally funded. Normally, EB is a 50/50 split between the trust fund and federal dollars. Additionally, the PUA program is fully-federally funded. The UI trust fund is funded through employer contributions.

Claims Payment Processing						
Week Ending	All UI Claims Paid	All UI Payments	PUA Claims Paid	PUA Payments	Total Payments Issued	Trust Fund Balance
<b>November 28</b>	18,745	\$6,138,744	8,387	\$2,782,380	\$8,921,124	\$252,170,953
<b>December 5</b>	21,870	\$7,451,856	8,211	\$2,638,931	\$10,295,096	\$249,016,877
<b>December 12</b>	21,160	\$7,206,483	8,126	\$2,367,865	\$9,574,348	\$247,023,458
<b>December 19</b>	21,019	\$7,072,397	8,264	\$2,691,133	\$9,763,530	\$245,080,698

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<b>December 26</b>	18,837	\$6,112,174	5,273	\$2,571,462	\$8,683,636	\$243,202,289
<b>January 2</b>	<b>18,797</b>	<b>\$6,459,827</b>	<b>1,258</b>	<b>\$1,017,026</b>	<b>\$7,476,853</b>	<b>\$242,681,331</b>

Figure 6

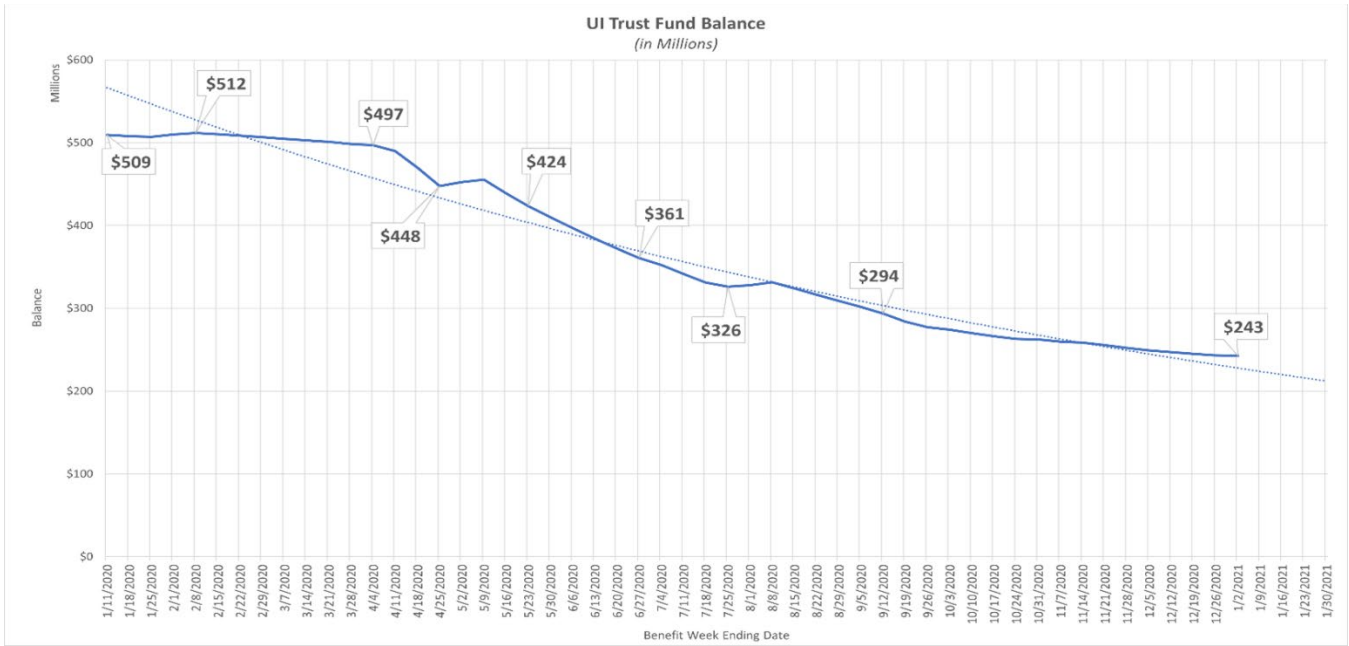
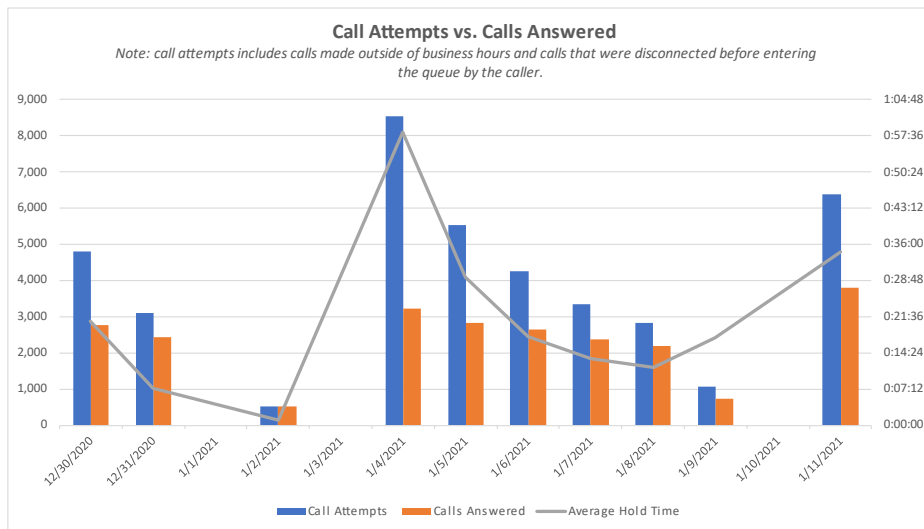


Figure 7

## CLAIMANT ASSISTANCE CENTER

Call Volume Summary			
Average Agents	Average Calls Per Day	Average Length of Call	Average Hold Time
114	4,036	12:02	21:05



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Figure 8

## OTHER RESOURCES

- [UI “How-To” video library \(applying for benefits, reopening a claim, submitting weekly claims\)](#)
- [Workforce Development services \(online job board, workshops, events, and local staff\)](#)
- [Vermont Job Link](#)
- [CARES Act UI Extension FAQ](#)
- [UI Updates Page \[Newsfeed\] \(NEW\)](#)

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